

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Victoria Gardens Library in Rancho Cucamonga is part of a multi-purpose project called the "Center of Imagination", which also features a Children's Theater and Event Center. It is the culmination of the dreams, vision and hard work of hundreds of professionals and community members. From the original Project Team Members of Library staff and Board, to the eventual Design Team which evolved into 30 design professionals ranging from Disney Imagineers to acoustical engineers, a quality and professional multi-purpose project that responds to the needs of the community has been the goal.



Today, the 22,500 square foot single outlet of Rancho Cucamonga Library contains 127,000 items. With a population of 127,000 people, 33,000 of them youngsters between the ages of 5 and 19, the Library suffers from overuse and overcrowding, with visitors numbering over 1,200 each day. For the future, with 5 new schools on the planning board by 2005, the need for additional library resources will reach critical proportions. Without the building of a second outlet, support to our children will drop to less than one book available per child.

For that reason, the proposal to build the Victoria Gardens Library has its roots solidly in the community, as a three year city wide planning process attests. Developing this project has involved thousands of community members. From the over 700 survey takers, the 100 plus focus group participants and school committee members, the hundreds of participants in community presentations and the thousands of residents who viewed the Library Telethon, the Project Planning Committee has received enthusiasm, thoughtful critique and creative direction.

In terms of the multi-use aspect of the project, the ultimate goal of the project planners was to create a design that answered not the question of "why put a theater and library together", but rather generated the question "Why would you ever consider NOT putting the Children's Theater and Library together?" Planning for the unique blend of a library with a Children's Theater has been an exciting and energizing concept. In working with school districts, community groups, home schooling parents, storytime visitors and the education community—all have expressed excitement and enthusiasm about the educational opportunities for youth through the blending of curriculum with live theater and resource support from the library.

One of the most exciting aspects of this project and the process that created it was the opportunity to create new and vital partnerships for the Library. The work in pulling together the Joint Venture project with the four school districts of Rancho Cucamonga, the creation of a vital team of library and cultural arts staff to bring synergy to the Children's Theater and Library partnership, these features of the project made this an exciting year.

In working through the needs assessment, we found the people of Rancho Cucamonga are a joy to work with. Creative, enthusiastic, endlessly willing to pitch in and help, this community of volunteers shape their own future with hard work and dedicated energy. This energy was evident in people like Library Foundation member Rebecca Davies, who teamed with Library Board members to present over 15 community presentations to Rancho Cucamonga educators, service club members and special interest groups. Or Mayor Pro Tem Diane Williams, organizing the support of the Chamber of Commerce. Or the Assistant San Bernardino County Sheriff, who spent valuable evenings working with the Community Task Force, building their recommendations for Information Technology and the future.

During the three years of assessments, feasibility studies, deliberations and site examinations, Rancho Cucamonga Public Library used the goals from the Library Master Plan 2000 to expand services to the public through outreach and technology offering an outstanding array of innovative programs, including a "Kidsmobile" to service schools, a Housecalls program for the homebound, and a website featuring 12 online databases.

The Victoria Gardens Library concept began with a building program designed using the California State Library produced "Libris Design" product. Adaptable, yet effective, the Libris software proved invaluable to the team in early concept planning. With the approval of the concept of the "Center of Imagination" in 2001, the architectural project team of Larry Wolff and Peter Pitassi were brought on board, joined by Building Program Consultant Linda Demmers. After an exciting three day Design Charette, the building began to take shape, the Libris Design program was fine tuned and the project was on its way!

The thought that the Library is the place where dreams are born and the theater is the place where dreams come to life has fired the enthusiasm for this innovative project. Shared lobby space and public restrooms, shared community room space in the event center for library programs as varied as the annual Summer Reading Faire to a staff in-service conference with teleconferencing needs, shared expenses in the areas of maintenance and technology support, shared programming support between library, community services and four elementary school districts—this project promises to unite a community more than ever before.

The vision of moving from a 10,000 square foot branch library of San Bernardino County Library in 1994 to a Library System of two library locations and almost 50,000 square feet of service space by 2004 represents a dream come true. Offering at last the 2 books per resident outlined in the Ray Holt Master Plan in 1991, the Victoria Gardens Library project promises so much more than "just" more books and more space for a library hungry community. It promises, as the Mission Statement outlines, a place "to bring imagination, ideas and people together."